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Senator Prague, Representative Serra, and members of the Aging Committee:

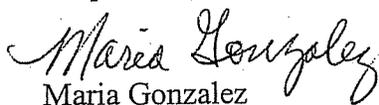
My name is Maria Gonzalez and I am a grandmother of 4, with one on the way. I am very proud of my grandchildren and love being a grandmother. I am here to speak on behalf of HB 6453 regarding the rights of grandparents with regard to visitation of their grandchild/grandchildren. I am lucky that I do have some access to see my grandson, every other weekend, but it is not at all like it used to be. I used to see my grandson several times a week and would like to be able to again have more frequent visits.

Connecticut needs a clear law with respect to visitation rights for grandparents, bottom line. I would ask that the committee look again at HB 6453 and consider some important changes or modifications. This bill should clearly define what constitutes "parent-like relationship," "significant harm," and "child's best interest." Several other states, such as Oklahoma, have successfully been able to do so. California and Michigan also have clear, expansive, and fair statutes on this topic.

In closing, I want to clearly state that I, as well as most other grandparents, are not looking to take away any rights from parents. We are not looking for a "parent-like" relationship with our grandchild/grandchildren; we want to be a grandparent. What we are looking for is the ability to fairly petition the court for access to visitation to our grandchild/grandchildren.

Thank-you very much for taking the time to hear my testimony. If you have any questions, please contact me at the above contact information.

Respectfully submitted,


Maria Gonzalez